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Ontario Women's Directorate

NEWS RELEASE

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MCGUINTY GOVERNMENT HELPS LOW-INCOME WOMEN ENTER THE SKILLED TRADES

Giving Women Opportunities to Achieve Economic Independence

BURLINGTON – Minister Responsible for Women's Issues Sandra Pupatello today announced more than $1.2 million to help low-income women develop new skills, find employment and achieve economic independence.

"This is a great time to be entering the skilled trades, as demand is high and will increase even more due to large numbers retiring from the industry," said Minister Pupatello. "That's why our government is investing in programs, like WIST, to create opportunities for women in fields where there is growing demand."

The Women in Skilled Trades program will fund five training programs across the province to help low-income women gain a foothold in the lucrative skilled trades sector. This year, women will receive instruction in trades such as welding, carpentry, landscaping, construction, industrial/metal working and mechanical/motive power at training institutions in Sudbury, Burlington, Waterloo, Thunder Bay, Dryden, Kenora and Hamilton.

The Centre for Skills Development and Training in Burlington received $200,095 in funding and is delivering an enhanced general carpentry program in partnership with the Residential Construction Council of Central Ontario, which has been a supporter of the centre's construction programs for many years. The program includes 30 weeks of in-class and on-the-job training, and a 16-week work placement.

"The Centre is thrilled once again to have the opportunity to deliver an enhanced general carpentry program under the Women in Skilled Trades initiative," said Kathy Mills, Chief Administrative Officer, Centre for Skills Development and Training. "We work closely with our construction industry partners to ensure that women graduate with the skills necessary to meet the demand for well-trained, well-qualified workers in the construction industry."

"The Centre makes a great contribution to the community by

Minister Pupatello with Mike Holmes, star of Holmes on Homes and supporter of WIST programs.

Minister Pupatello with guest speakers (from left to right): Andra Matusevics, Home Depot, Kathy Mills, CAO, The Centre for Skills Development and Training, Mike Holmes, star of Holmes on Homes,

delivering the WIST program," said Kevin Flynn, MPP Oakville, who participated in today's announcement. "Congratulations to the students who are embarking on a new career and a path to economic independence."

Mike Holmes, star of *Holmes on Homes* and an employer of WIST graduates, participated in today's announcement, "As a contractor for over 20 years, I know how important it is to give people the proper training to do things right. I employ two WIST graduates who are excellent workers because of the great job the Centre does in preparing its students. Congratulations to the Ontario government for supporting this program and helping women get into the trades."

Including this year's funding, the McGuinty government has provided a total of more than $4.6 million since 2003 to train hundreds of women through the Women in Skilled Trades program.

Other government initiatives to promote women's economic independence include:

- Investing $2.7 million over two years to provide information technology training for low-income women
- Investing $4 million over two years to 10 Employment Training Pilot Programs that offer skills training, education, support and counselling to vulnerable women.

and Kevin Flynn, MPP-Oakville.

Minister Pupatello with some of WIST grant program recipients, from left to right Don Bernosky,Executive Director, Innovation and Skills Development, Confederation College, Kathy Mills, CAO, The Centre for Skills Development and Training, Terri Smith, Principal, AAT School Hamilton Inc, Greg White, Chair, School of Trades and Apprenticeship - Waterloo Region, Conestoga College, Tanja Gancevich, School of Trades & Apprenticeships, Program Marketing and Employer Liaison, Conestoga College.

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